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16 May 1988

STATEMENT BY GEN. RAULI HELMINEN, DEPUTY TO SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPRESENTATIVE

ON SETTLEMENT OF SITUATION RELATING TO AFGHANISTAN

The following statement was issued in Islamabad and Kabul at 5 p.m. local time on Saturday, 14 May, by General Rauli Helminen, Deputy to the Representative of the Secretary-General on the Settlement Relating to Afghanistan, Diego Cordovez: Today, General Helminen reported to Mr. Cordovez, representative of the Secretary-General on the settlement of the situation relating to Afghanistan, that he has received full assurances from the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan that each Government has taken all measures that are required in order to enable it to be in full compliance with all the provisions of the instruments of the agreements on the settlement of the situation relating to Afghanistan, signed in Geneva on 14 April 1988. General Helminen, Deputy to the Representative, had requested that he be provided such assurances prior to 15 May 1988, when all the instruments of the settlement will enter into force.

The Government of the Republic of Afghanistan informed Mr. Cordovez and General Helminen on 12 May 1988 that:

The Government of the Republic of Afghanistan has adopted all necessary measures for full compliance with the provisions of the Geneva Agreements, and is prepared for the fulfilment of its obligations.

In connection with the bilateral agreement on the principles of mutual relations, in particular non-interference and non-intervention, the Government of Afghanistan, in pursuance of its peaceful policy and desiring to normalize relations and promote good-neighbourliness and peace and security in the region, is firmly intent to strictly and meticulously respect and abide by these principles in its relations with Pakistan.

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Concerning the bilateral agreement on voluntary return of refugees, the Government of Afghanistan, in order to pave the way for the peaceful and unhindered return of the refugees, had taken serious and concrete steps, even prior to the signing of the Geneva Agreements, which include specific decrees on the privileges, exemptions and immunities for returnees.

The Afghan Government has also approved the re-establishment of rural development authority and a co-ordinating commission for the affairs related to the return of the refugees. A protocol of co-operation has been signed in Geneva between Afghanistan and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), on the basis of which, a UNHCR office will soon be opened in Kabul.

In conformity with article IV of the Agreement on the voluntary return of the refugees, the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan is fully prepared for the establishment of the mixed commissions, and has already selected members of the Afghan team. We hope that these commissions would be set up as soon as possible to determine crossing points, establish transit centres and work out all other modalities for the phased return of the refugees.

As far as it concerns the return of the Soviet limited military contingent, the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have already reached agreement on necessary arrangements and modalities on the basis of which the return of the Soviet limited military contingent to their peace-loving country shall commence on 15 May and 50 per cent of the troops shall leave the territory of Afghanistan within three months. The remaining 50 per cent shall leave the Afghan territory within no more than further six months. Thus the return of all the Soviet limited military contingent shall be completed within the time-frame specified in paragraph 5 of the Agreement on the interrelationships of the Geneva accords.

The Government of Afghanistan wishes to assure the representative of the Secretary-General that it has fulfilled and shall continue to fulfil, faithfully and with good will, all its obligations in conformity with the provisions of paragraph 6 of the Agreement on the interrelationships.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan informed General Helminen on 11 May 1988 that:

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan affirms that all measures and steps required to ensure full compliance of the provisions of the instruments concluded as component parts of the settlement will be completed by 14 May 1988 in order to fulfil in good faith the obligations on the part of Pakistan deriving from the instruments.

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In pursuance of the bilateral agreement on voluntary return of refugees, a special agreement with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will be signed within a week. The return of the refugees will be a principal factor in the implementation of the Geneva Agreements. The Government of Pakistan, therefore, expects that the requisite information will be made available to assure the refugees that the necessary conditions have been created for their return in safety and honour.

The Government of Pakistan welcomes the setting up of the United Nations Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNGOMAP) and the appointment of Maj. Gen. Rauli Helminen as Deputy to the Representative of the Secretary-General and assures him and the personnel of the Mission its full co-operation in the discharge of their responsibilities under the Good Offices Mission. For this purpose, all the necessary facilities will be extended. Arrangements are being made expeditiously to provide requisite logistical support to UNGOMAP.

The Headquarters units of the United Nations Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNGOMAP) in both Kabul and Islamabad have been established. The Deputy to the Representative of the Secretary-General wishes to express his appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the assistance and co-operation they have provided to UNGOMAP.

On 15 May 1988, UNGOMAP inspection teams will be visiting a number of refugee camps in Pakistan and will also be visiting different localities in Afghanistan.

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